

Message Text

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P R 171349Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9094
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY ROME
/AMEMBASSY SOFIA 2530
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 BUCHAREST 2563

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: RO, SHUM, CVIS, PINT
SUBJ: "PASSPORT DISSIDENTS": GROUPS PROLIFERATE, TRY
TO DEMONSTRATE
REFS: (A) BUCHAREST 2120; (B) BUCHAREST 0329; (C)
77 BUCHAREST 8111

1. SUMMARY: DESPITE THE ISSUANCE IN JANUARY OF TOURIST
PASSPORTS TO THE LAST MEMBERS OF 1977'S ROMANIAN "PASSPORT
DISSIDENT" GROUPS REPORTED REF B, NEW GROUPS OF MAINLY
YOUTHFUL PASSPORT-SEEKERS HAVE CONTINUED TO ORGANIZE.
DEPARTURES WITH TOURIST PASSPORTS HAVE CONTINUED STEADILY,
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AND 1978'S "PASSPORT DISSIDENT" SCENE HAS BEEN LARGELY
FREE OF HEAVY-HANDED OFFICIAL ATTEMPTS AT DISCOURAGEMENT
ENCOUNTERED BY LAST YEAR'S CANAL AND BRAILA GROUPS. RE-
CENTLY WE HAVE OBSERVED A SIZABLE PROLIFERATION OF "PASS-
PORT DISSIDENT" GROUPS, WHICH, APPARENTLY STIMULATED BY
CEAUSESCU VISIT AND PRESENCE OF SEVERAL FOREIGN JOURNALISTS
IN BUCHAREST, HAVE STAGED AT LEAST ONE ABORTIVE DEMONSTRA-

TION IN PAST WEEK. END SUMMARY.

2. AS REPORTED REF B, LAST MEMBERS OF CANAL AND BRAILA GROUPS WERE ISSUED TOURIST PASSPORTS IN JANUARY. SOLE EXCEPTION OF CANAL GROUPS'S LEADER, JOSIF NITA, WAS REMOVED BY ISSUANCE OF EMIGRATION PASSPORT AND HIS DEPARTURE FOR THE U.S. MARCH 13.

3. SINCE THE END OF JANUARY, HOWEVER, NEW GROUPS HAVE CONTINUED TO FORM. THUS FAR WE HAVE IDENTIFIED FIVE NEW GROUPS INCLUDING ABOUT 60 PEOPLE, WHO HAVE FOLLOWED FAMILIAR ROUTE PIONEERED BY EARLIER GROUPS: COMMUNICATING THEIR NAMES TO RFE OR OTHER MEDIA OF PUBLICITY, FREQUENTLY VISITING BUCHAREST PASSPORT OFFICE EN MASSE AND PRESSING THEIR DEMANDS WITH THREATS OF HUNGAR STRIKES. THESE GROUPS HAVE HAD FAIR SUCCESS, BUT MEMBERS SEEM LESS MATURE AND DETERMINED THAN THEIR PREDECESSORS, AND ARE LESS READY TO PROVE THEIR METTLE WITH CHALLENGES TO AUTHORITIES SUCH AS SUSTAINED HUNGAR STRIKES OF SORT CARRIED OUT BY CANAL GROUP (REF C). MEANWHILE, SINCE END OF MARCH, MEMBERS OF THREE MORE LOOSELY-ORGANIZED GROUPS COMPRISING ABOUT 70 PEOPLE HAVE APPEARED AT EMBASSY. WITH SEVERAL FOREIGN JOURNALISTS RECENTLY IN BUCHAREST AND CEAUSESCU VISIT WELL PUBLICIZED, MEMBERS OF THESE GROUPS HAVE SOUGHT TO STAGE PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS.

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4. OF THIS YEAR'S EARLIER, BETTER ORGANIZED GROUPS, SEVEN HOTEL CLERKS AND SOME WIVES WHO APPEARED AT EMBASSY AT END OF JANUARY HAVE ALL DEPARTED OR BEEN ISSUED TOURIST PASSPORTS, AS HAVE A GROUP OF 15 YOUNG MEN INCLUDING TAXI-DRIVERS, A PHOTOGRAPHER, ELECTRICIANS, AND WORKERS. GROUP INCLUDED LUCIAN OLTEANU, SUBJECT OF REF A, WHO HAS APPARENTLY RETURNED TO AUSTRIA. ORGANIZED GROUPS STILL SEEKING PASSPORTS INCLUDE SEVEN YOUNG MEN (THE GHERLA 7) WHO HAD BEEN JAILED AT GHERLA FOR ATTEMPTS AT CROSSING YUGOSLAV BORDER ILLEGALLY. GROUP IS LED BY VASILE HALBERTAL-BOULEANU, A FILM PROJECTIONIST, AND SEEMS RECENTLY TO HAVE PICKED UP ADDITIONAL ADHERENTS. HALBERTAL-BOULEANU AND TWO OTHERS HAVE BEEN PROMISED EARLY ISSUANCE OF EMIGRATION PASSPORTS WITH EXIT VISAS FOR AUSTRIA BY COLONEL NAGY, WHOM WE UNDERSTAND TO BE CHIEF OF PERMANENT DEPARTURES DEPARTMENT OF BUCHAREST PASSPORT OFFICE.

5. A GROUP OF 14, LED BY AIRCRAFT MECHANIC VALENTIN VASILESCU AND INCLUDING SEVERAL GYPSIES, PRESENTED THEIR DEMANDS TO PASSPORT OFFICE IN LATE FEBRUARY, BEFORE SECURING ANY WESTERN PUBLICITY. AN ANGRY OFFICIAL REPORTEDLY TORE UP PASSPORT APPLICATIONS, THROWING AN ASHTRAY

AT ONE OF GROUP. A WEEK LATER, SEVERAL MEMBERS OF GROUP
WERE ARRESTED AND DETAINED FOR 24 HOURS, THEN RELEASED
WITH CONDITION THAT THEY MUST RENOUNCE EMIGRATION REQUESTS.
IN EARLY MARCH FIRST MEMBERS OF GROUP RENOUNCED EMIGRATION
AND WERE ISSUED TOURIST PASSPORTS; SEVEN HAVE NOW LEFT,
INCLUDING AUREL NICOLAE, WHO REPORTEDLY HAS RETURNED FROM
VIENNA DUE TO LACK OF MONEY AND FACT HE HAD LEFT WIFE
AND CHILD IN BUCHAREST. ANOTHER GROUP OF FIVE CAME TO
EMBASSY IN EARLY FEBRUARY, BUT HAVE NOT RETURNED; THEY
MAY HAVE DEPARTED FOR AUSTRIA. ALTOGETHER, EMBASSY NOW
COUNTS 50 "PASSPORT DISSIDETS" KNOWN TO HAVE DEPARTED
SINCE NOVEMBER 1 OR ISSUED PASSPORTS; AUSTRIAN EMBASSY HAS
NOTED GROUPS AND INDIVIDUAL MALCONTENTS ISSUED TOURIST
PASSPORTS FOR PERMANENT DEPARTURE AND PUTS ACTUAL NUMBER
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CLOSER TO 150.

6. CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS: ON MARCH 29, TWENTY REPRESENTATIVES
OF A GROUP OF 48 CAME TO EMBASSY, SOME OF THEM PREVIOUS
CONSULAR APPLICANTS QUALIFIED FOR U.S. IMMIGRANT VISAS
OR TCP. GROUP--SOME OF WHOSE MEMBERS ARE ABOVE USUAL AGE--IS
LARGELY MADE UP OF PEOPLE WITH RELATIVES IN THE FRG, THE
U.S., OR OTHER STATES WHO, HAVING BEEN FRUSTRATED IN
LANGTHY ATTEMPTS TO OBTAIN PASSPORTS, HAVE DECIDED TO

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FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9095

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY ROME
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USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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ORGANIZE. THREE OTHER YOUTHFUL GROUPS HAVE TURNED UP, ONE WHICH INCLUDES A FEW MEMBERS OF GROUP ORGANIZED IN JANUARY BY PETRE NEGREANU, A LATHE-OPERATOR WHO CLAIMS TO HAVE BEEN PICKED UP BY POLICE IN OCTOBER, SHORN OF BEARD AND LONG HAIR AND BEATEN ON HANDS AND BARE FEET WITH CLUBS. IN RECENT DAYS, MEMBERSHIP OF THESE GROUPS HAS BEEN FLUID, WITH PEOPLE MOVING FROM ONE GROUP TO ANOTHER.

6. NEGREANU AND SOME OF THE OTHERS RECENTLY ATTEMPTED TO MOUNT DEMONSTRATIONS OF 15-60 PERSONS IN FRONT OF HOTELS INTERCONTINENTAL AND UNION AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND WE HAVE HAD RUMORS AND PHONE CALLS ABOUT "PASSPORT DISSIDENT" DEMONSTRATION IN FRONT OF EMBASSY. DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE BEEN FRUSTRATED BY UNUSUALLY HEAVY POLICE COVERAGE OF LIKELY SITES AND EMBASSY, ALTHOUGH NO CONSULAR APPLICANTS OR "PASSPORT DISSIDENTS" HAVE BEEN DENIED ACCESS TO EMBASSY. ON APRIL 10--DATE APPOINTED FOR DEMONSTRATION AT INTERCONTINENTAL--NEAR-BY BUS STOP WAS MOVED TO KEEP CONCENTRATIONS OF PEOPLE AWAY FROM HOTEL AREA. AT LEAST ONE WOULD-BE DEMONSTRATOR WAS ARRESTED AT HOME AT 6 A.M., AND THERE MAY HAVE BEEN OTHER ARRESTS. NEVERTHELESS, ONE GROUP OF THREE BRIEFLY DISPLAYED PLACARD READING "THE RIGHT TO PASSPORTS: HELSINKI" IN FRONT OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE OFFICES ON CALEA VICTORIEI APRIL 10, ACCORDING TO TURKISH COUNSELOR WHO SAW THEM. ONE OF DEMONSTRATORS TOLD US THAT HE AND COMPANIONS WERE QUICKLY PICKED UP BY POLICE, INTERROGATED FOR 12 HOURS AND THREATENED WITH FORCED LABOR IF THEY PERSISTED, BUT WERE RELEASED WITHOUT BEING PHYSICALLY ABUSED.

7. COMMENT: SEVERAL POINTS ABOUT RECENT "PASSPORT DISSIDENT" ACTIVITY STRIKE US AS INTERESTING. DEPARTURES OF EARLIER GROUPS PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS OF NAMES BY RFE, AND SOME PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCES BETWEEN MEMBERS OF NEW GROUPS AND PREVIOUS DEPARTURES HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO PRO-

LIFICATION OF LAST FEW MONTHS. EVEN SO, WE WERE STRUCK BY LACK OF ANY COORDINATION BETWEEN LATE WINTER'S GROUPS AND IGNORANCE OF EACH OTHERS' ACTIVITIES, THIS IN CONTRAST TO RECENT FLUID, SHIFTING GROUP MEMBERSHIPS. FACT THAT SOME GROUPS HAVE PICKED UP ADHERENTS, OR HAVE EVEN FORMED SPONTANEOUSLY FROM FRUSTRATED INDIVIDUALS WAITING IN PASSPORT OFFICE LINES POINTS TO INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF GROUPS AS METHOD FOR OBTAINING PASSPORTS. LEVEL OF POLITICAL CONCEPTUALIZATION AND SOPHISTICATION AMONG GROUPS
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HAS CONTINUED TO DECREASE, AND MOTIVATIONS OF CURRENT "PASSPORT DISSIDENTS" ARE NO LONGER TRACEABLE TO PAUL GOMA'S FRUSTRATED HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE OF 1977. RATHER, CURRENT GROUPS ARE MOTIVATED, LIKE MANY OTHER WOULD-BE EMIGRANTS, BY FRUSTRATIONS OF LIFE IN A RIGIDLY ORGANIZED, CONFORMIST SOCIETY, FRUSTRATIONS WHICH CANNOT BE CIRCUMVENTED AND ONLY APPARENT SOLUTION TO WHICH IS EMIGRATION. IN SOME CASES MOTIVATIONS HAVE BEEN STIMULATED, AS WITH NEGREANU, BY ABUSE AND HUMILIATION AT HANDS OF OFFICIALDOM, OR, IN OTHER CASES, BY PETTY HARRASSMENT BROUGHT ON BY INDIVIDUALS' ASSOCIATIONS WITH DEPARTED "PASSPORT DISSIDENTS." IN TALK WITH CHARGE APRIL 7, REUTERS CORRESPONDENT SIDNEY WEILAND, WHO HAD MET WITH NUMBERS OF "DISSIDENTS," SAID HE WAS IMPRESSED WITH APOLITICAL APPROACH AND NAIVETE OF THOSE HE HAD TALKED WITH: THEIR SOLE COMPLAINT WAS LACK OF OPPORTUNITY IN ROMANIA, AND SOLE DESIRE SELF-BETTERMENT IN WEST.

8. DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF "PASSPORT DISSIDENT" PHENOMENON ARE YOUGH OF GROUPS MEMBERS, ORGANIZED METHOD USED TO OBTAIN PASSPORTS, AND HIGH DEGREE OF SUCCESS IN SECURING PASSPORTS. AGE FACTOR MAY BE ASCRIBED TO INABILITY OF SOCIETY TO UTILIZE AND REWARD TALENTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE, AND, WHILE INCREASING NUMBER OF GROUP MEMBERS SEEM NAIVE HANGERS-ON, GOOD PORTION ARE BRIGHT, AMBITIOUS, AND DISILLUSIONED WITH PROSPECT OF ADVANCEMENT THROUGH CONFORMITY. LARGE PERCENTAGE HAVE HAD OCCUPATIONAL OR SOCIAL CONTACT WITH FOREIGNERS, FEW ARE MARRIED OR HAVE FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES.

9. IN TECHNICAL SENSE, WE ARE INTERESTED BY FACT THAT TOURIST PASSPORT TACTIC HAS APPARENTLY BEEN CONFINED TO BUCHAREST PASSPORT OFFICE; IN RECENT MONTHS SOME PROVINCIAL MALCONTENTS--MAINLY LARGE FAMILIES OF BAPTISTS AND PENTECOSTALS--HAVE RECEIVED EMIGRATION OR STATELESS PASSPORTS, OCCASIONALLY AFTER VERY SHORT WAITING PERIODS. WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS, GOR HAS ALLWEDD "PASSPORT DISSIDENTS"
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WITH TOURIST PASSPORTS, AS WELL AS STATELESS AND EMIGRATION PASSPORT HOLDERS WHO NEEDED PRO-FORMA U.S. C-1'S TO LEAVE, TO DEPART FOR VIENNA WITH POSSIBILITY OF STAY IN TRAIKIRCHEN DESPITE FACT THAT VIENNA ROUTE OFFICIALLY REMAINS A NON-NO IN WAKE OF JANUARY'S INVALIDATION OF "VIENNA LETTER."

10. ANOTHER STRIKING FACTOR OF THIS YEAR'S "PASSPORT DISSIDENT" SCENE HAS BEEN CONTINUATION OF PASSPORT ISSUANCE IN ABSENCE OF ORGANIZED PROVOCATIONS SUCH AS ACTUAL HUNGER STRIKES. GOR TURNED ON TOURIST PASSPORT TAP LAST FALL IN RESPONSE TO ACTIVITIES OF MORE HIGHLY ORGANIZED AND MOTIVATED GROUPS INCLUDING HUNGER STRIKES, AND DECEMBER HUNGARIAN STRIKES AT TRAIKIRCHEN WERE FOLLOWED WITHIN A MONTH BY CLOSURE OF "VIENNA LETTER" ROUTE. IN ABSENCE OF OTHER APPARENT MOTIVATIONS OF GOR SELF-INTEREST IN CONTINUING PASSPORT ISSUANCE, IT IS HARD TO AVOID IMPRESSION THAT TWICE-BURNED BY HUNGARIAN STRIKES, GOR IS, FOR THE TIME BEING, TRIPLY SHY EVEN OF THEIR THREAT, PREFERRING CONTINUED PASSPORT ISSUANCE TO PUBLICITY ABOUT REPRESSION. GOR HAS THUS LEFT TAP ON FOR GROWING NUMBERS OF PEOPLE SEEKING PASSPORTS--IN A

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FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9096
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AMEMBASSY SOFIA

USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 BUCHAREST 2563

GAME THAT HAS BECOME REMARKABLY EASY TO PLAY--ALTHOUGH
ITS DISSIDENT PROBLEM HAS BEEN QUALITATIVELY REDUCED
AND SECURITY SERVICES CONTINUE TO WATCH GROUPS CLOSELY.
UPPING THE PRICE OF DISSIDENT CREDENTIALS THROUGH A RE-
TURN TO MORE HAVEY-HANDED DISCOURAGEMENT, CUTTING OFF
PASSPORT ISSUANCE OR CONTINUING IT TOGETHER WITH
IMPOSSIBLE RECEIVING-STATE VISA REQUIREMENTS AS PRE-
CONDITION FOR DEPARTURE, WOULD BE OBVIOUS GOR RESPONSES
IF NUMBERS OF PASSPORT-SEEKERS OR DEPARTURES GROW
TOO LARGE.
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